

# Regional overview: East Asia



*Progress towards EFA has been uneven in East Asia.<sup>1</sup> Overall, few countries have achieved or are close to achieving the four most quantifiable EFA goals; the majority are in an intermediate position and one is far from achieving EFA. Most countries have established programmes for children under age 3, but their impact on children's overall health and development varies. Pre-primary enrolment has steadily increased, markedly so in some countries. Progress towards universal primary education (UPE) has been made, with many countries now having relatively high primary net enrolment ratios (NERs). Nevertheless, more than 9 million children remain out of school, about 3 million more than in 1999. Poor school progression and retention remain concerns in several countries, and international and national student assessments point to low learning outcomes in many others.*

*Despite the steady expansion of formal and non-formal education, 124 million adults in East Asia still lack basic literacy and numeracy skills, according to conventional assessment methods; 71% are women. Secondary education, especially lower secondary, has become an important priority in East Asia. In 2005 the regional gross enrolment ratio (GER) in secondary education was 73%, but participation levels varied markedly between lower and upper secondary. Gender disparities are limited at all education levels except tertiary. Overall, the biggest challenge for the region is to continue the upward trend towards EFA while reducing the number of out-of-school children, improving education quality, expanding early childhood care and education (ECCE) programmes and coverage, increasing participation in secondary education, and scaling up youth and adult programmes.*

*In reviewing progress since 2000, this regional overview summarizes findings in response to key questions addressed by the 2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report: What are the main EFA achievements and challenges remaining at this point, midway to the target date of 2015? Which countries are advancing fastest and which are facing the greatest difficulties? Which policy initiatives are promoting access to education and improving its quality, especially for the most disadvantaged groups and areas? Has the international community provided adequate support? The 2008 Report shows that, despite progress towards EFA in East Asia, some areas of concern remain, especially in relation to education quality and equity.*

## EFA progress and challenges

### Early childhood care and education

The region has insufficient programmes addressing the urgent health, care and educational needs of children under 3. While enrolment rates in pre-primary education have increased, many countries lag behind in providing access to vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

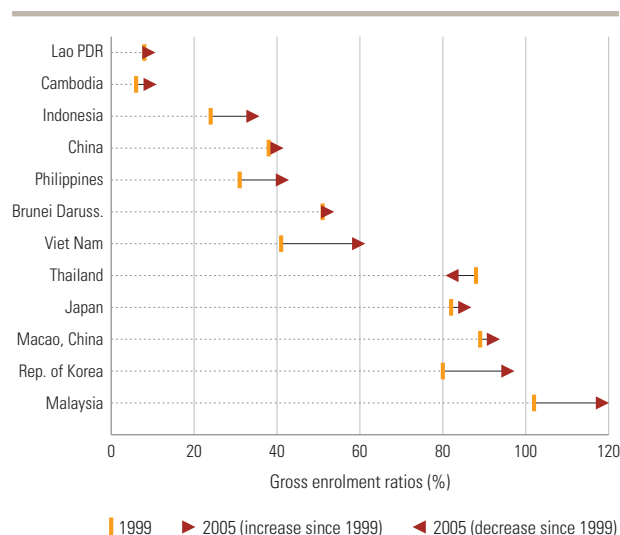
- Family structures and the social and economic roles of women and men are an important factor in the care and education of children. In 2003 the median labour force participation rate for women was 52% in East Asia, ranging from less than 44% in Brunei Darussalam to 70% or more in China, Cambodia and Viet Nam. About three-quarters of countries reported having statutory maternity leave, most lasting twelve weeks.
- Eleven of the thirteen countries in the region for which information is available have at least one official programme addressing the health, care and educational needs of children under 3.
- Nevertheless, the average under-5 mortality rate for the region was still 37‰ in 2005. The rate by country varied widely, from less than 10 per 1,000 births in Brunei Darussalam, Japan, Macao (China), the Republic of Korea and Singapore to more than 120 per 1,000 in Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. In addition, while most children are inoculated against preventable diseases, undernutrition and malnutrition persist in several

1. According to the EFA classification, the East Asia region comprises fifteen countries: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Japan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Macao (China), Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. Until 2007 the Global Monitoring Report Team produced a combined review for the region of East Asia and the Pacific; since then separate overviews have been prepared for East Asia and for the Pacific.

countries, with more than 40% of children in Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic suffering moderate to severe stunting (compared with less than 15% in China, Singapore and Thailand).

- The number of children enrolled in pre-primary schools in the region decreased by nearly 4% since 1999 to 35 million in 2005, reflecting in particular the shrinking of the relevant age group in China. Even so, the average pre-primary GER increased from 40% to 43% during the period. Increases of more than ten percentage points in pre-primary GERs occurred in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Viet Nam.
- The challenge of expanding pre-primary education remains especially great in Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, where the GER is less than 10%. Enrolment ratios are also relatively low (about 40% or less) in China, Indonesia and the Philippines. GERs above 80%, however, are found in Japan, Macao (China), Malaysia, the Republic of Korea and Thailand.
- Overall, the average gender parity index (GPI) for the region was 0.95 in 2005. Greater gender disparities in favour of boys were found in China and Viet Nam (GPI of 0.91), and in favour of girls in Cambodia (1.08) and Malaysia (1.12). In addition to gender, disparities in participation in pre-primary education by household wealth, residence and ethnicity need to be addressed in almost all countries in the region.
- Research has shown that socially and economically marginalized children stand to benefit the most from ECCE, but they are most likely to be excluded from it. Attendance rates in pre-primary programmes are considerably lower for rural children, those lacking birth certificates and those from poorer households.
- The need to improve the quality of ECCE programmes remains an enormous challenge throughout the region. Countries need to increase teacher training and qualifications, reduce pupil/teacher ratios (PTRs) and find ways to incorporate mother tongue instruction into schooling. The region's PTR was 26:1 in 2005. Values above this average were found in Japan and the Philippines (PTRs of about 30:1 or above).

**Figure 1: Changes in pre-primary education gross enrolment ratios, 1999 to 2005**



## Universal primary education

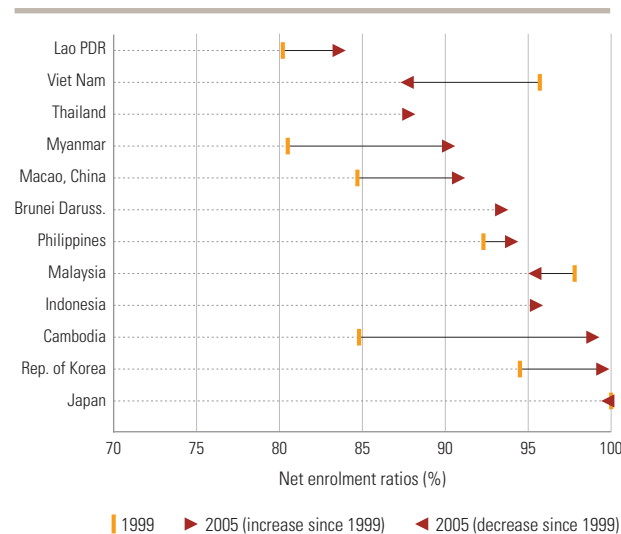
Despite high access and participation levels, there are still millions of out-of-school children in the region. Getting children to complete the primary school cycle remains a formidable challenge in many countries.

- Access to primary school is high in East Asia: the average gross intake rate in 2005 was 100%, with demographic trends since 1999 having led to reduced numbers of new entrants.
- The region's primary NER in 2005 was comparatively high at 94%, but down from 96% in 1999. Among the countries with data, only the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand and Viet Nam had primary NERs below 90% in 2005. On the other hand, Cambodia, Japan and the Republic of Korea achieved UPE.
- Most East Asian countries with the relevant data registered increases in their primary NERs between 1999 and 2005, including Cambodia and Myanmar, where the rate grew by ten percentage points or more. The NER declined slightly in Malaysia and from 96% to 88% in Viet Nam. In the latter case the trend is likely to reverse, since a policy to abolish school fees was adopted in 2004.
- It is estimated that 9.2 million children of primary school age were not enrolled in either primary or secondary school in 2005, and the number has increased since 1999.

The countries facing the greatest challenge in the number of out-of-school children include, in descending order of magnitude, Viet Nam, the Philippines, Myanmar, Thailand and Indonesia, each with more than 400,000 children not enrolled in 2005. It is difficult to evaluate the situation in China, the world's most populous country.<sup>2</sup>

- Progress towards UPE is not uniform within countries, although Cambodia and, to a lesser extent, China and Indonesia have reduced geographic disparities in primary NERs over time. Other factors, such as place of residence, household wealth, disabilities and mother's education, strongly influence whether a child goes to school. In the Philippines and Viet Nam there is a strong negative correlation (-0.4 or above) between household poverty and the primary school attendance rate in both rural and urban regions. In Indonesia, the association is weak in rural areas and sometimes also in the urban ones. Disabled children are much less likely to attend school than others: in Indonesia the percentage of children with disabilities not attending school was nearly 71% in 2003, compared with 12% for children without disabilities. The cost of education is another obstacle to school participation; Cambodia and Viet Nam have abolished school fees since 2000.
- Poor school progression and completion rates remain important concerns in several countries. Grade repetition in primary education is relatively low, with the median percentage of repeaters at 2.2% in 2005. However, repeaters represented 19% of pupils in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. In most countries with data, repetition rates are highest in grade 1, particularly in Cambodia (24%) and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (34%).
- Despite high gross intake rates into primary education, the median survival rate to the last grade of primary was 85% in 2004, with the rates ranging from less than 65% in Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, where the survival rate to the last grade had improved substantially since 1999, to about 98% or above in Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and the Republic of Korea. Not all pupils who reach the last grade of primary education complete it. Cohort completion rates are lower than survival rates, quite significantly in some cases. The most pronounced gap (above twenty percentage points) was in Brunei Darussalam.

**Figure 2: Changes in primary education net enrolment ratios, 1999 to 2005**



## Post-primary education

- As in most regions of the developing world, demand for secondary education in East Asia has increased significantly since the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar. In 2005, 158 million students were enrolled in secondary schools, an increase of 27 million (21%) since 1999. The GER for secondary education rose from 64% to 73% during the period. The increase was particularly noticeable (above ten percentage points) in Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Macao (China) and Viet Nam. Despite this progress, low secondary GERs (50% or less) were found in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar, while high rates (above 95%) were reported in Brunei Darussalam, Japan, Macao (China) and the Republic of Korea.
- Much of the growth in secondary education was achieved at the lower secondary level. In 2005, the lower secondary GER was 93% (compared with a world mean of 79%), considerably higher than the upper secondary GER of 54%. However, participation levels in lower secondary education varied greatly. For example, Cambodia (44%), Myanmar (45%) and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (56%) have comparatively low GERs for lower secondary education, while figures for Brunei Darussalam, China, Japan, Macao (China) and the Republic of Korea are at or above 98%. At the upper secondary level, similar intra-regional differences are apparent.

2. Accurate estimates of out-of-school children in this region depend, in large part, on the reliability of data for China, a country for which there is no internationally agreed estimate of NER (see *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008*, p. 51).

- Most countries in the region include lower secondary education as part of compulsory schooling, which averages about eight or nine years of required attendance. The most common pattern of compulsory schooling is for children to begin school at age 6 and continue to age 14 or 15. The exceptions are the Lao People's Democratic Republic (ages 6 to 10), Myanmar (5 to 9) and Vanuatu (6 to 12).
- Private enrolment in secondary education accounts for a significant proportion of enrolment at this level in some East Asian countries. Shares of secondary private enrolment in 2005 were 36% in Brunei Darussalam and 96% in Macao (China), compared with less than 1% in Cambodia, Japan, Malaysia and Viet Nam.
- Demand for post-primary education was also seen at the tertiary level, where the number of students enrolled almost doubled to 40 million between 1999 and 2005. This tremendous movement was driven in large part by expanding opportunities in China. Nevertheless, only a relatively small share of the relevant age group has access to tertiary education in East Asia, with an average GER of 23% in 2005, although that represents a 10% rise since 1999. Tertiary GERs in 2005 ranged from less than 10% in Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic to 61% in Macao (China) and 91% in the Republic of Korea.
- Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam have pursued a combination of several levels of equivalency programmes, including primary, secondary and sometimes tertiary education.
- In China and Viet Nam, other national programmes, typically managed by ministries overseeing economic development and employment, focus on skills development in the informal economy. Programmes focusing on rural development and run in cooperation with ministries of agriculture are found in, for example, China, the Philippines and Thailand.
- Some non-formal education programmes are linked to community development. Thailand, for instance, had established more than 8,000 community learning centres by 2006 to provide structured learning activities according to community needs. Community learning centres in China, Indonesia and the Philippines include literacy classes, continuing education and skills training as the most frequently provided programmes.
- Despite limited data on national enrolments in non-formal education, information can be retrieved from household surveys. Results show that only a small proportion of youth and adults state that they obtained their highest educational attainment level though a 'non-standard curriculum': less than 10% in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam.

## Learning needs of young people and adults

- Most countries in East Asia have yet to seriously address the challenge of meeting the varied learning needs of youth and adults through organized programmes to develop skills (basic, livelihood, life) and help people lead more productive and fulfilling lives. The need for such programmes is particularly great in countries with large or fast-growing youth and adult populations.
- In general, governments in the region have mainly responded to the learning needs of young people and adults by expanding formal secondary and tertiary education. However, a great variety of structured learning activities for youth and adults takes place outside formal education systems, often targeting school dropouts and disadvantaged groups. Non-formal education programmes are highly diverse, differing in terms of objectives, target groups, content and pedagogy, and tend to be overseen by multiple ministries or other government bodies. At least nine different ministries and national bodies are involved in Indonesia and Thailand, not to mention non-government organizations (NGOs) and local communities with small programmes about which few data are readily available.

## Adult literacy and literate environments

The need to facilitate the acquisition and improvement of adult literacy and numeracy skills remains a key challenge facing the region. Improving the literate environments available to adults would help address this challenge.

- Literacy is a fundamental human right, a springboard not only for achieving EFA, but more broadly for reducing poverty and broadening participation in society. The average adult literacy rate in the region increased from 82% in 1985–1994 to 92% in 1995–2004. Despite the comparatively high literacy rate in East Asia, 124 million adults, 71% of them women, still lacked basic literacy and numeracy skills according to conventional assessment methods.
- Between the two decades the number of illiterates decreased dramatically (by 45%) in the region, mainly due to a substantial reduction in China, where 98 million became literate. Progress in China stemmed largely from

increased primary school participation, highly targeted adult literacy programmes and the wider reach of literate environments.

- While adult literacy improved in the other countries in the region, some still face big challenges, including the Lao People's Democratic Republic (with a literacy rate of 69%), Cambodia (74%) and Malaysia (89%).
- Improving women's literacy is of crucial importance for gender equality. In 1995–2004 the average regional GPI in adult literacy was 0.93, with striking gender disparities favouring men in Cambodia (0.76) and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (0.79).
- Besides gender, key correlates of illiteracy include poverty, place of residence and other individual characteristics. In general, illiteracy rates are highest in the countries with the greatest poverty. The link between poverty and illiteracy is also observed at household level, with the literacy rates of the poorest households substantially lower than those of the wealthiest.
- Throughout the region literate environments need to be improved and monitored. Countries need to promote access to written materials (newspapers, books, posters), broadcast media (radio, television) and information and communications technology (ICT: fixed and mobile phones, computers, Internet access), in order to encourage literacy acquisition, a reading culture, improved literacy retention and access to information.

## Quality of education

Improving the quality of education remains a challenge throughout the region. Although increasing access to, and completion of, primary education is a crucial step towards UPE, countries also need to address such quality dimensions as having enough trained teachers and instructional time, equipped classrooms and a safe and healthy learning environment.

### Monitoring learning outcomes

- Between 2000 and 2006, about three-quarters of countries in East Asia conducted at least one national learning assessment, compared to 13% during 1995–1999. National assessments tend to focus more on grades 4 to 6 than on grades 1 to 3 or 7 to 9, and are predominantly curriculum-based and subject-oriented. Many countries in the region have also participated in at least one international

assessment since 2000, including Indonesia, Japan, Macao (China), Malaysia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand.

### Learning achievement

- Results of international assessments such as TIMSS and PISA indicate relatively strong learning outcomes in certain countries of the region, including Japan, Macao (China), Malaysia, the Republic of Korea and Singapore. However, others show poor learning outcomes: in PISA 2003, 44% of 15-year-old students in Thailand and 63% in Indonesia performed at or below level 1 in reading proficiency.
- Findings from national assessments confirm the relatively low learning outcomes in some countries. In Thailand, for example, overall learning levels are low, and achievement in mathematics and language has decreased in grades 3 and 6.

### Instructional time

- Worldwide, countries officially require an average of 700 annual hours of instruction in grades 1 and 2 and nearly 750 hours in grade 3. By grade 6 the average is 810 hours. East Asia is just below the global median in grades 1 through 5 and above it in grade 6. Nevertheless, children often receive fewer actual instructional hours less than officially required. Significant loss of instructional time and inefficient use of classroom time reflect poor education quality and have a detrimental impact on learning outcomes.

### Teachers

- Between 1999 and 2005 the number of primary school teachers in East Asia declined from 9.9 million to 9.5 million, corresponding to declines in enrolments. The number of secondary teachers rose, however, from 7.5 million to 8.9 million.
- The primary PTR in the region fell from 22:1 in 1999 to 20:1 in 2005. The current regional PTR is lower than the global average (25:1) and the average for developing countries (28:1). Improvement in PTRs was also observed at country level, with ratios declining in most countries. Nevertheless, there were still several countries with relatively high primary PTRs, including Cambodia (53:1), the Philippines (35:1), and the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar (both at 31:1).

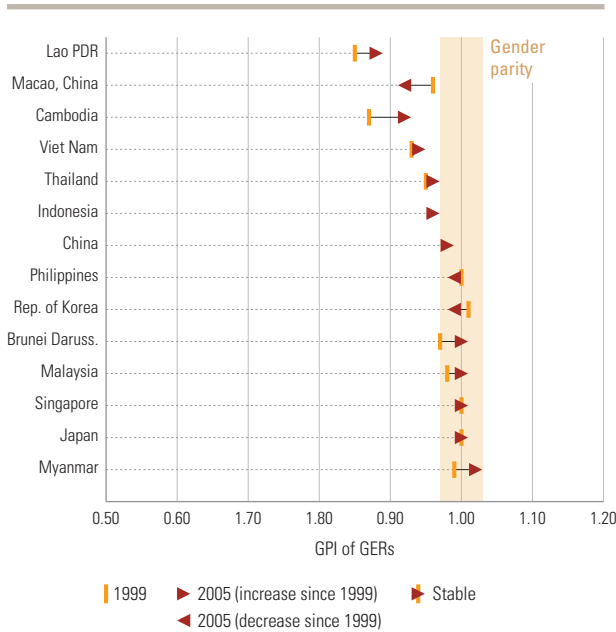
- National averages can hide large in-country disparities in the distribution of teachers. PTRs tend to be much higher in public than private schools in Cambodia, for instance, pointing to teacher shortages in public schools.
- Information on the proportion of trained primary teachers is available for only six countries in the region: the share ranged from 76% in Myanmar to 98% in Cambodia in 2005. The proportion of trained teachers increased in all countries with data, particularly Myanmar and Viet Nam (sixteen percentage points in each).
- The only countries to have achieved the gender parity goal at both primary and secondary level were China, Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar, the Republic of Korea and Singapore.
- Gender disparities remain the norm at tertiary level, with an average GPI of 0.92 in 2005. High disparities favouring men are found in most of the region's countries, particularly Cambodia (0.46) and the Republic of Korea (0.63). On the other hand, many more women are enrolled in tertiary education in Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and the Philippines (GPIs above 1.20).

## Gender parity and equality

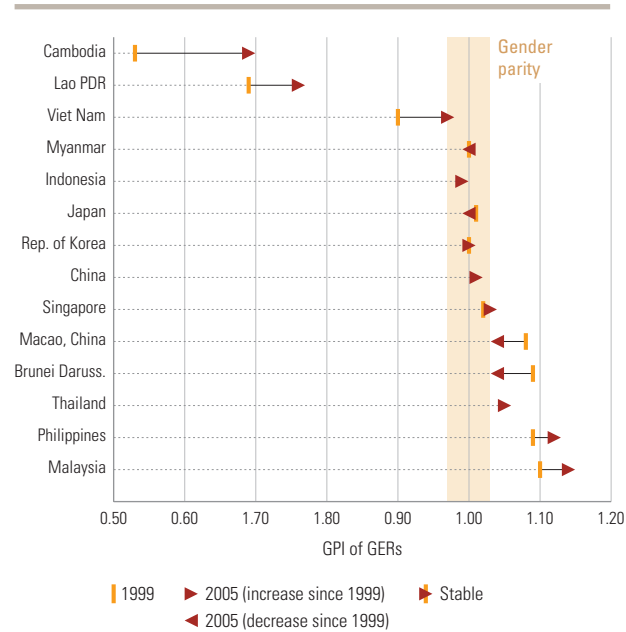
Gender parity has been achieved by most countries in the region in primary education, but not in secondary education. Overall, eight of the fourteen countries with data have missed the goal of eliminating gender disparities in both primary and secondary education. In countries where gender disparities still prevail, they are often greater at higher education levels. More than 70% of the countries with data were at parity or close to it at primary level in 2005, compared with 50% in secondary, while only China was at parity in tertiary education.

- While most countries in East Asia have achieved gender parity in primary education, with a regional GPI of 0.98 in 2005, some gender disparities are found in Cambodia, Indonesia, Macao (China), Thailand and Viet Nam, with more boys enrolled than girls (GPIs from 0.92 to 0.96); the Lao People's Democratic Republic had the greatest gender disparity favouring boys (0.88).
- Once they have access to school, girls tend to do better than boys: in most East Asian countries boys repeat grades at a higher rate than girls.
- In secondary education gender parity was achieved in half the countries with data. Gender disparities still prevailed in the remaining countries, but with some variation: Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic recorded under-enrolment of girls in 2005 (GPIs of less than 0.77), whereas in Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand boys were under-enrolled (GPIs of more than 1.05). The former group has made noticeable progress since 1999, while for some countries in the latter group the situation has worsened.
- Reducing gender disparities in education does not automatically translate into equality between women and men. Salary gaps, differential access of women and men to certain fields of study and jobs, and lack of political representation are evidence of enduring gender inequality.
- Overall, gender equality remains elusive. Physical and psychological violence by teachers and other staff and by children themselves are still found in many schools. A survey in six provinces in China found that boys were 2.5 times more likely than girls to be punished. On the other hand, girls were more likely to be affected by sexual violence and harassment. Sexual abuse of girls often goes unreported in Japan, for example, partly because of a girl's shame if she comes forward.
- Content analysis of textbooks points to gender bias against girls and women regardless of level of education, subject matter, country or region. Social studies textbooks in China, for example, portray all scientists as males and teachers as females.
- While globally the academic performance of boys and girls is moving towards convergence, addressing gender differences in learning outcomes remains a challenge in East Asia. For example, boys significantly outperform girls in mathematics and sciences in the Philippines and in mathematics in the Republic of Korea. On the other hand, girls significantly outperform boys in language in Thailand.
- Women now represent the majority of enrolment in tertiary education, but they tend to be concentrated in traditionally 'feminine' fields. In most countries with data, they account for less than one-third of students in scientific fields but over two-thirds in the humanities, social sciences and health-related disciplines.

**Figure 3: Changes in gender disparities in primary education gross enrolment ratios, 1999 to 2005**



**Figure 4: Changes in gender disparities in secondary education gross enrolment ratios, 1999 to 2005**



### The Education for All Development Index: summarizing progress

The EFA Development Index (EDI) is a composite measure of a country’s situation with regard to attainment of the EFA agenda. It was introduced in the 2003/4 *EFA Global Monitoring Report* and is updated annually. Ideally, it should include measures of all six EFA goals, but for now it focuses on the four most easily quantified: UPE, adult literacy, gender parity and equality, and education quality, with one proxy indicator for each goal.<sup>3</sup>

The EDI for 2005 could be calculated for ten of the fifteen countries in the East Asia region. Among the results:

- The Republic of Korea and Brunei Darussalam either have achieved the four most quantifiable EFA goals, on average, or are close to doing so.

- Seven countries rank in an intermediate position, with EDI values between 0.80 and 0.94. In most of these countries, low adult literacy rates and/or low survival rates to grade 5 pull down the overall EDI.
- The Lao People’s Democratic Republic is far from achieving the EFA goals, with an EDI score of 0.75. For it to move forward, significant improvement needs to occur in all four components.
- Data for Viet Nam indicate a slight decline in the EDI value since 1999, mainly due to a lack of improvement in the total primary NER.

**Table 1: Mean distance from the four EFA goals**

EFA achieved <i>(EDI between 0.98 and 1.00)</i>	Close to EFA <i>(EDI between 0.95 and 0.97)</i>
(1): Republic of Korea	(1): Brunei Darussalam
Intermediate position <i>(EDI between 0.80 and 0.94)</i>	Far from EFA <i>(EDI below 0.80)</i>
(7): Cambodia, Indonesia, Macao (China), Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Viet Nam	(1): Lao People’s Democratic Republic

3. UPE (goal 2) is proxied by total primary NER (children of primary school age enrolled in either primary or secondary education); adult literacy (goal 4) by the literacy rate of those aged 15 and above; gender parity and equality (goal 5) by the gender-specific EFA index, which is an average of the GPIs for primary and secondary GER and the adult literacy rate; and quality of education (goal 6) by the survival rate to grade 5. The EDI gives equal weight to the four proxy measures. Since each measure is expressed as a percentage, the EDI for a country ranges from 0% to 100% or, when expressed as a ratio, from 0 to 1, where 1 represents full achievement of EFA as summarized by the EDI.

### Box 1: Comprehensive EFA policies and strategies in East Asia

As highlighted in the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008*, increased participation, equity and quality in education can be promoted together through a mix of universal and targeted measures that encompass all six EFA goals. Adequate finance and supportive institutional environments are also crucial elements for progress.

A comprehensive approach is the hallmark of Education for All. Examples include:

- **Cambodia** has increased access to pre-primary education for the most disadvantaged children by targeting the poorest communities. In 2000 the country launched a Priority Action Programme targeting poor families, which reduces the cost of schooling, offers scholarships for secondary students, provides breakfast in schools serving poor communities and introduces health measures. The programme also includes measures to improve teacher training and allowances to encourage teachers to accept posts in hardship communities. In certain areas, minority languages have been introduced as the medium of instruction.
- The **Philippines** has expanded access to pre-primary education for the most disadvantaged children by focusing on the poorest communities. In some cases this entails the provision of food for poor children in pre-school and grade 1. The Philippines Government also gives tax incentives to NGOs, businesses and other civil society groups to 'adopt' schools by providing support for infrastructure, learning materials, food and nutrition supplements, and science laboratory equipment. This programme has benefited more than half the public schools nationwide since 2000. For out-of-school youth and adults, equivalency or 'second chance' services are available, sometimes linked to literacy programmes. Additional programmes focusing on rural development are run in cooperation with the ministry of agriculture.
- **Viet Nam's** early childhood programmes target ethnic minorities. The country has also constructed and rehabilitated classrooms in rural and ethnic minority areas, and has organized a special primary education programme for disadvantaged children in some of the poorest provinces. Some communities have set up evening classes for out-of-school primary and secondary children. Others have established equivalency or 'second chance' services to address the learning needs of young people.

## Financing Education for All

### *National financial commitments to EFA*

- Half the countries in East Asia devoted less than 3% of GNP to public spending on education, with considerable variation by country (from 2% or less in Cambodia and Indonesia to more than 6% in Malaysia). Since 1999, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia and the Republic of Korea have increased education's share of GNP, while in Thailand the share has declined from 5.1% to 4.3%.
- The share of total government expenditure devoted to education was about 15% in the region in 2005. This median level was lower than in Central Asia, the Arab States and sub-Saharan Africa, but higher than in other regions.

- Households participate in education financing through fees levied by schools, direct payments for school supplies and uniforms, and contributions to parent associations. When compared to public and other private sources, the share of household expenditure on education institutions was found to be relatively high in many East Asian countries. Estimates from 2003 put the household share at 22% or more in Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Thailand.

### *Contribution of external aid to EFA*

- External aid to education is an important source of EFA financing in some countries in East Asia. Countries in the region received US\$1.3 billion per year in aid to education, averaged over 2004 and 2005, with US\$0.3 billion of this allocated to basic education.



- The share for East Asia of total aid to education decreased slightly from 16% to 14% between 1999 and 2005, while the share of aid to basic education dropped to 6% in 2005 from 10% in 1999.
- Indonesia, the Philippines and Viet Nam were among the twenty-three highest recipients of aid to basic education among low-income countries over 2004 and 2005. While the amount to the first declined between 1999 and 2005, aid to basic education received by Viet Nam increased by 15% a year during the same period, partly reflecting the country's participation in the Fast Track Initiative.

## Prospects for achieving EFA

For the three goals with explicit quantitative targets – goal 2 (UPE), goal 4 (reduction by half in the level of adult illiteracy) and goal 5 (elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education) – relevant education indicators were projected to 2015 and 2025,<sup>4</sup> extrapolating trends observed in each country between the early 1990s and 2005.<sup>5</sup>

For the EFA goals without explicit quantitative targets:

- *Early childhood care and education.* In most countries of the region, ECCE has garnered considerable attention, but progress is slow and uneven. Additional and more effective programmes will need to be established if the health, care and educational needs of children under 3 are to be met. Pre-primary education for children over 3 is growing but very slowly, and even without projections it is evident on present trends that participation rates will remain low in several East Asian countries by 2015. If so, participation rates will continue to favour children from wealthier households and those living in urban areas. The need to target ECCE programmes to poor and disadvantaged children, who stand to benefit the most from them, is clear.
- *Learning needs of young people and adults.* Countries in East Asia face serious challenges to address the diverse learning needs of young people and adults through organized programmes of education and training. Most countries are continuing to expand secondary education, especially the lower level, and some emphasize tertiary education. Many have put in place non-formal education frameworks with limited geographic coverage. These trends will likely increase disparities in the access of

out-of-school youth and adults to lifelong learning opportunities. Pressure for new approaches to this challenge will be especially salient in high-population countries and those with lower literacy rates.

- *Quality.* Country interest in improving education quality is growing and signs of progress are clear: improvements to school infrastructure, relatively low PTRs, an emphasis on teacher training, relatively low repetition rates and considerable participation in learning assessments (both international and national). Nevertheless, considerable disparities persist both within and between countries: in learning outcomes, availability of trained teachers, instructional hours and PTRs. In addition, traditional forms of teaching and curriculum continue to predominate. Countries will need to find ways to improve pedagogical practices and learning materials, to better allocate well-trained teachers and to ensure that new teachers are available to replace those who will be leaving due to retirement, career change, illness or death. Teacher projections show that the number of primary level teachers needed in East Asia will continue to decrease due to a decline in the school-age population. Exceptions to this pattern include Brunei Darussalem, Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, where the number of teachers needs to increase and adequate training must be provided to achieve universal access to and participation in quality education.

4. Goal 4 was projected only for 2015.

5. The years vary for each indicator according to data availability.

Table 2: Prospects for achieving EFA

UPE goal	
Goal already achieved ( <i>total NER ≥ 97%</i> )	<b>5 countries</b> Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea
UPE prospects	
(Projections made for six countries that have not yet achieved the goal, extrapolating trends between 1991 and 2005)	
High chance of achieving the goal by 2015 ( <i>moving towards the goal, with steady progress</i> )	<b>2 countries</b> Myanmar, Philippines
Low chance of achieving the goal by 2015 ( <i>moving towards the goal with rapid progress, but further to go</i> )	None
At risk of not achieving the goal by 2015 ( <i>moving away from the goal or progress too slow</i> )	<b>4 countries</b> Lao People's Democratic Republic*, Macao (China)*, Malaysia, Viet Nam
Serious risk of not achieving the goal by 2015 ( <i>furthest to go, and moving away from the goal or progress too slow</i> )	None  * UPE likely to be achieved in 2025
Adult literacy target	
Universal literacy achieved ( <i>Adult literacy rate ≥ 97%</i> )	None
Adult literacy prospects	
(Adult literacy rate projections made for twelve countries that have not yet achieved the target, extrapolating trends between 1995 and 2004)	
High chance of achieving the target by 2015 ( <i>moving towards the goal, with steady progress</i> )	<b>6 countries</b> China, Indonesia, Macao (China), Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand
Low chance of achieving the target by 2015 ( <i>moving towards the goal with rapid progress, but further to go</i> )	None
At risk of not achieving the target by 2015 ( <i>moving away from the goal or progress too slow</i> )	<b>4 countries</b> Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar, Philippines, Viet Nam
Serious risk of not achieving the target by 2015 ( <i>furthest to go and moving towards the goal, but progress too slow</i> )	<b>2 countries</b> Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic
Gender goal (parity in primary and secondary education)	
Achieved or likely to be achieved in 2005 ( <i>GPIs between 0.97 and 1.03</i> )	<b>6 countries</b> China, Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar, Republic of Korea and Singapore
Gender parity prospects	
(Projections of GPI in primary and secondary education GERs were made for eight countries, based on trends between 1991 and 2005)	
Gender parity goal likely to be achieved in 2015	<b>1 country</b> Brunei Darussalam
Gender parity goal likely to be achieved in 2025	None
Gender parity goal at risk of not being achieved in 2015 or 2025	<b>7 countries</b> Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Macao (China), Malaysia*, <b>Philippines*</b> , <b>Thailand</b> , Viet Nam

## Notes:

\* Gender parity achieved in primary education, but not in secondary education.

In countries whose names are shown in blue, gender disparities at the expense of boys are observed in primary or secondary education.

## Abbreviations

**ECCE: early childhood care and education.** Programmes that, in addition to providing children with care, offer a structured and purposeful set of learning activities either in a formal institution (pre-primary or ISCED O) or as part of a non-formal child development programme. ECCE programmes are normally designed for children from age 3 and include organized learning activities that constitute, on average, the equivalent of at least 2 hours per day and 100 days per year.

**GER: gross enrolment ratio.** Total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to this level of education. For the tertiary level, the population used is that of the five-year age group following on from the secondary school leaving age. The GER can exceed 100% due to late entry or/and repetition.

**GNP: gross national product.** Gross domestic product plus net receipts of income from abroad. As these receipts may be positive or negative, GNP may be greater or smaller than GDP. This latter indicator is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy, including distributive trades and transport, plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products.

**GPI: gender parity index.** Ratio of female to male values (or male to female, in certain cases) of a given indicator. A GPI of 1 indicates parity between sexes; a GPI above or below 1 indicates a disparity in favour of one sex over the other.

**NER: net enrolment ratio.** Enrolment of the official age group for a given level of education, expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group.

**PISA: Programme for International Student Assessment.**

**PTR: pupil/teacher ratio.** Average number of pupils per teacher at a specific level of education, based on headcounts of both pupils and teachers.

**TIMSS: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study.**

Table 3: East Asia and the Pacific, selected education indicators

Country or territory	Total population (thousands)	Compulsory education (age group)	EFA Development Index (EDI)	Adult literacy rate (15 and over)				Early childhood care and education				Primary education								Country or territory		
				1985–1994 <sup>1</sup>		1995–2004 <sup>1</sup>		Child survival and well-being		Pre-primary education		NER, total (%)		GPI of GER (F/M)		Out-of-school children <sup>2</sup>	Survival rate to last grade (%), total		% of trained teachers, total		Pupil/teacher ratio <sup>3</sup>	
				Total (%)	GPI (F/M)	Total (%)	GPI (F/M)	Under-5 mortality rate (%)	Moderate and severe stunting (%)	1999	2005	1999	2005	1999	2005		1999	2004			2005	1999
				2005	2005	2005–2010	1996–2005 <sup>1</sup>	2005	2005	1999	2005	2005 (000)	1999	2004	2005	1999	2005					
East Asia																						East Asia
Brunei Darussalam	374	5-16	0.965	88	0.89	93	0.95	7	...	51	52	...	93	0.97	1.00	1	92	99	84	14	10	Brunei Darussalam
Cambodia <sup>4</sup>	14 071	...	0.807	...	...	74	0.76	125	45	6	9	85	99	0.87	0.92	23	49	57	98	48	53	Cambodia <sup>4</sup>
China	1 315 844	6-14	...	78	0.78	91	0.91	36	14	38	40	...	...	...	0.98	...	...	...	...	...	18	China
DPR Korea	22 488	6-15	...	...	...	...	...	53	37	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	DPR Korea
Indonesia	222 781	7-15	0.935	82	0.86	90	0.92	41	...	24	34	...	96	...	0.96	414	...	85	...	...	20	Indonesia
Japan	128 085	6-15	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	82	85	100	100	1.00	1.00	12	...	...	...	21	19	Japan
Lao PDR	5 924	6-10	0.750	...	...	69	0.79	126	42	8	9	80	84	0.85	0.88	126	54	63	83	31	31	Lao PDR
Macao, China	460	5-14	0.938	...	...	91	0.92	8	...	89	92	85	91	0.96	0.92	3	...	...	91	31	23	Macao, China
Malaysia	25 347	...	0.945	83	0.87	89	0.93	11	...	102	119	98	95	0.98	1.00	150	...	98	...	21	17	Malaysia
Myanmar	50 519	5-9	0.866	...	...	90	0.92	98	32	2	...	80	90	0.99	1.02	487	...	70	76	31	31	Myanmar
Philippines	83 054	6-12	0.893	94	0.99	93	1.02	28	30	31	41	92	94	1.00	0.99	648	...	72	...	35	35	Philippines
Republic of Korea	47 817	6-15	0.993	...	...	...	...	5	...	80	96	94	99	1.01	0.99	9	100	99	...	31	28	Republic of Korea
Singapore	4 326	6-16	...	89	0.87	93	0.92	4	2	53	...	82	...	1.00	1.00	...	...	...	...	27	24	Singapore
Thailand	64 233	6-14	...	...	...	93	0.95	21	13	88	82	...	88	0.95	0.96	419	...	...	...	21	19	Thailand
Viet Nam <sup>4</sup>	84 238	6-14	0.899	88	0.89	90	0.93	32	31	41	60	96	88	0.93	0.94	1 007	83	87	93	30	22	Viet Nam <sup>4</sup>
Pacific																						Pacific
Australia	20 155	5-15	0.986	...	...	...	...	6	...	...	104	92	97	1.00	0.99	61	...	...	...	18	...	Australia
Cook Islands	18	5-15	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	86	91	85	...	0.95	0.98	...	...	...	...	18	16	Cook Islands
Fiji	848	6-15	0.966	...	...	...	...	24	...	17	16	99	96	0.99	0.98	1	82	96	...	...	28	Fiji
Kiribati	99	6-15	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	75	97	...	1.01	1.02	...	...	81	...	25	25	Kiribati
Marshall Islands	62	6-14	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	59	50	...	90	0.98	0.96	0.7	...	...	...	15	17	Marshall Islands
Micronesia (Federated States of)	110	6-13	...	...	...	...	...	42	...	37	...	...	...	...	0.97	...	...	...	...	...	...	Micronesia (Federated States of)
Nauru	14	6-16	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	71	...	...	...	0.99	...	...	...	...	...	22	Nauru
New Zealand	4 028	5-16	...	...	...	...	...	6	...	88	93	99	99	1.01	1.00	2	...	...	...	18	16	New Zealand
Niue	1	5-16	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	154	100	99	...	1.00	1.24	...	...	...	...	16	12	Niue
Palau	20	6-17	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	63	64	97	...	0.93	0.93	...	...	...	...	15	...	Palau
Papua New Guinea	5 887	6-14	...	...	...	57	0.80	87	...	35	59	...	...	0.93	0.88	...	57	58	...	36	35	Papua New Guinea
Samoa	185	5-14	...	98	0.99	99	0.99	27	...	51	49	92	90	0.98	1.00	0.3	92	...	...	24	25	Samoa
Solomon Islands	478	...	...	...	...	...	...	52	...	35	41	...	63	0.93	0.95	26	...	...	...	19	...	Solomon Islands
Timor-Leste <sup>4</sup>	947	7-15	...	...	...	...	...	114	49	...	16	...	98	...	0.92	3	...	...	...	...	34	Timor-Leste <sup>4</sup>
Tokelau	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	125	...	...	...	1.35	...	...	...	...	...	6	Tokelau
Tonga	102	6-14	0.926	...	...	99	1.00	22	...	30	23	91	95	0.98	0.95	0.3	...	...	...	21	20	Tonga
Tuvalu	10	7-14	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	99	...	...	1.02	1.07	...	...	...	...	19	19	Tuvalu
Vanuatu	211	6-12	...	...	...	74	...	34	...	49	...	91	94	0.98	0.97	2	69	71	...	24	20	Vanuatu
	Sum			Weighted average				Weighted average		Weighted average		Weighted average		Sum	Median		Weighted average					
East Asia and the Pacific	2 102 740	...	...	82	0.84	92	0.93	37	19	40	43	95	94	0.99	0.98	9 524	...	...	...	22	20	East Asia and the Pacific
East Asia	2 069 561	...	...	82	0.84	92	0.93	37	...	40	43	96	94	0.99	0.98	9 189	...	85	...	22	20	East Asia
Pacific	33 178	...	...	94	0.99	93	0.98	43	...	57	72	87	90	0.99	0.96	335	...	...	...	21	19	Pacific
Developing countries	5 165 463	...	...	68	0.77	77	0.84	86	31	28	34	81	86	0.91	0.94	68 825	...	79	...	27	28	Developing countries
Developed countries	1 007 223	...	...	99	0.99	99	1.00	7	...	73	78	97	96	1.00	0.99	2 270	98	98	...	16	15	Developed countries
World	6 450 253	...	...	76	0.85	82	0.89	78	30	33	40	83	87	0.92	0.95	72 124	...	87	...	25	25	World

Data underlined are for 2002. Data in italics are for 2003. Data in bold italics are for 2004. Data in bold are for 2006 or 2005 for survival rate to last grade.

1. Data are for the most recent year available during the period specified.

2. Data reflect the actual number of children not enrolled at all, derived from the age-specific enrolment ratios of primary school age children, which measure the proportion of those who are enrolled in either primary or secondary school (total primary NER).

3. Based on headcounts of pupils and teachers.

4. Fast Track Initiative: country with endorsed sector plans.

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008, statistical tables; UNESCO Institute for Statistics; CRS online database (OECD-DAC, 2007).

Table 3 (continued)

Country or territory	Secondary education								Tertiary education		Education finance			Country or territory
	GER in lower secondary		GER in upper secondary		GER in all of secondary				GER		Total public expenditure on education as % of GNP		Total aid to basic education (constant 2005 US\$ millions)	
	2005		2005		1999		2005		2005		1999	2005	2004–2005 annual average	
	Total (%)	GPI (F/M)	Total (%)	GPI (F/M)	Total (%)	GPI (F/M)	Total (%)	GPI (F/M)	Total (%)	GPI (F/M)				
<b>East Asia</b>													<b>East Asia</b>	
Brunei Darussalam	115	0.95	80	1.16	85	1.09	96	1.04	15	2.02	...	...	...	Brunei Darussalam
Cambodia <sup>4</sup>	<b>44</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0.57</b>	16	0.53	<b>29</b>	<b>0.69</b>	3	0.46	1.0	<b>2.0</b>	23	Cambodia <sup>4</sup>
China	<b>99</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>1.03</b>	62	...	<b>76</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0.97</b>	1.9	...	12	China
DPR Korea	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	DPR Korea
Indonesia	77	1.02	50	0.95	...	...	63	0.99	17	0.79	...	<i>1.0</i>	78	Indonesia
Japan	101	1.00	102	1.00	102	1.01	102	1.00	55	0.89	3.5	<b>3.5</b>	...	Japan
Lao PDR	56	0.79	37	0.72	33	0.69	47	0.76	8	0.72	1.0	2.5	13	Lao PDR
Macao, China	117	0.97	80	1.13	76	1.08	97	1.04	61	0.73	3.6	...	...	Macao, China
Malaysia	<b>95</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1.26</b>	69	1.10	<b>76</b>	<b>1.14</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1.31</b>	6.1	<b>6.2</b>	4	Malaysia
Myanmar	45	0.98	31	1.02	34	1.00	40	0.99	...	...	0.6	...	5	Myanmar
Philippines	87	1.09	79	1.21	76	1.09	85	1.12	28	1.23	...	<b>2.5</b>	44	Philippines
Republic of Korea	<b>98</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>1.00</b>	100	1.00	<b>96</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>0.63</b>	3.8	<b>4.6</b>	0	Republic of Korea
Singapore	80	1.00	25	1.25	...	1.02	63	1.03	...	...	...	...	...	Singapore
Thailand	87	<b>1.00</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>1.15</b>	...	...	<b>71</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>1.06</b>	5.1	4.3	4	Thailand
Viet Nam <sup>4</sup>	88	0.95	59	1.03	62	0.90	76	0.97	16	0.71	...	...	95	Viet Nam <sup>4</sup>
<b>Pacific</b>													<b>Pacific</b>	
Australia	114	1.00	217	0.90	154	1.00	148	0.95	72	1.25	5.1	<b>4.9</b>	...	Australia
Cook Islands	<b>85</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>1.24</b>	60	1.08	<b>72</b>	<b>1.02</b>	.	.	0.4	...	1	Cook Islands
Fiji	100	1.04	70	1.11	81	1.11	88	1.07	15	1.20	5.7	<b>6.4</b>	8	Fiji
Kiribati	110	1.07	65	1.26	84	1.18	87	1.13	.	.	7.7	...	0	Kiribati
Marshall Islands	105	0.98	63	1.10	...	1.06	76	1.05	<i>17</i>	<i>1.30</i>	13.3	<b>9.5</b>	6	Marshall Islands
Micronesia (Federated States of)	106	1.09	75	1.05	...	...	85	1.07	...	...	6.5	...	0	Micronesia (Federated States of)
Nauru	...	...	...	...	...	...	<b>48</b>	<b>1.07</b>	.	.	...	...	0	Nauru
New Zealand	108	1.00	141	1.14	110	1.06	123	1.07	82	1.50	7.3	7.0	...	New Zealand
Niue	...	...	...	...	98	1.10	99	0.91	.	.	...	...	1	Niue
Palau	118	0.92	87	1.28	101	1.07	101	1.1	...	...	...	...	2	Palau
Papua New Guinea	<i>35</i>	<i>0.79</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>0.70</i>	22	0.76	26	<i>0.79</i>	...	...	...	...	31	Papua New Guinea
Samoa	100	1.00	72	1.20	80	1.10	80	1.12	...	...	4.5	...	5	Samoa
Solomon Islands	47	0.88	16	0.73	24	0.75	29	0.83	.	.	3.3	...	14	Solomon Islands
Timor-Leste <sup>4</sup>	71	1.02	34	0.96	...	...	52	1.0	...	...	...	...	8	Timor-Leste <sup>4</sup>
Tokelau	...	...	...	...	...	...	<b>101</b>	<b>0.88</b>	.	.	...	...	1	Tokelau
Tonga	<b>93</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>1.4</b>	101	1.11	<b>98</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1.67</b>	6.4	<b>4.9</b>	2	Tonga
Tuvalu	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	.	.	...	...	0	Tuvalu
Vanuatu	<b>47</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0.58</b>	30	0.88	<b>41</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0.58</b>	6.7	<i>10.0</i>	2	Vanuatu
<b>Weighted average</b>													<b>Weighted average</b>	
East Asia and the Pacific	93	1.00	55	1.01	64	0.96	74	1.00	24	0.93	4.8	...	378	East Asia and the Pacific
East Asia	93	1.00	54	1.01	64	0.96	73	1.00	23	0.92	3.5	3.0	...	East Asia
Pacific	89	0.99	132	0.96	107	1.01	105	0.98	50	1.31	6.4	...	...	Pacific
Developing countries	75	0.93	46	0.92	53	0.88	60	0.93	17	0.91	4.4	4.7	3 940	Developing countries
Developed countries	104	0.99	99	1.02	100	1.00	102	1.00	66	1.28	5.0	5.5	28	Developed countries
World	79	0.94	53	0.94	60	0.91	66	0.94	24	1.05	4.5	4.9	4 373	World

Data underlined are for 2002. Data in italics are for 2003. Data in bold italics are for 2004. Data in bold are for 2006 or 2005 for survival rate to last grade.

1. Data are for the most recent year available during the period specified.

2. Data reflect the actual number of children not enrolled at all, derived from the age-specific enrolment ratios of primary school age children, which measure the proportion of those who are enrolled in either primary or secondary school (total primary NER).

3. Based on headcounts of pupils and teachers.

4. Fast Track Initiative: country with endorsed sector plans.

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008, statistical tables; UNESCO Institute for Statistics; CRS online database (OECD-DAC, 2007).

## Regional overview: East Asia



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